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DCI/IC-77-0293

27 APR 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : The Problem of USIB

1. At our 13 April meeting to review the SIGINT Committee's Five Year Guidance Plan, you made some comments on the usefulness of USIB and its Committees and on the need to find better ways to task other agencies. As I understand it, you feel that the jobs now being done by USIB and by Committees like mine could be better done by the IC Staff.

2. I disagree with this idea because I believe the cure would wind up being worse than the disease. There is no question that the USIB mechanism has defects. But I believe it would be better to try to fix the things that are wrong with USIB than to dismantle it and start fresh. The remainder of this memorandum is my argument in support of this view, and some suggestions for improving the existing structure.

What are the pluses and minuses of the USIB and its Committees?

3. They have many of the failings of committees in general. That is, there is difficulty in responding quickly to urgent tasks, judgments tend to be waffled, parochialism tends to defeat objective analysis, and seldom is there an imaginative response to a difficult question. These problems become noticeable whenever a Committee is faced with an issue which has a major budget impact. However, aren't these ills a result of the basic structure of the intelligence community itself? The community is composed of a group of autonomous agencies, each with its own budget and each with a chief owing primary allegiance to his own department head. USIB and its Committees are reflections of this structure, and so long as the structure remains unchanged it will be very hard to make dramatic improvements to USIB operations.

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4. In addition to these generic problems, the USIB Committees have also suffered from the fact that the agency representatives (including those from CIA) often turn out to be people who are mediocracies or even downright inept.

5. Nevertheless, I submit that there are a number of positive aspects to the USIB operations which are often overlooked, as follows:

a. A useful mechanism is provided for passing information on particular topics across agency boundaries, and at all levels. At the USIB meetings the DCI has a convenient way to exchange views with the intelligence chiefs and to receive information as well. In the Committees and their working groups senior management and the working level are also provided with this opportunity.

b. A wide variety of problems which range from being trivial to moderately important are handled routinely. In general, a standing committee provides a more effective way to handle these problems than does the creation of a fresh ad hoc group to deal with each new problem.

c. Ready access is provided for user organizations to air their particular concerns. Conversely, the matters being discussed in committee are routinely reported back to the user organizations who thereby have a chance to object to actions which they disagree with. Both ways a mechanism exists to keep things from falling between the cracks.

d. USIB and its Committees have an institutional history which provides a useful background against which to view incoming action items. Members of ad hoc groups convened to study new problems run the risk of not knowing how related issues were dealt with in the past.

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6. Another way to look at the performance of USIB is to focus on the really egregious problems. From my vantage point, the issue which has plagued the community for years is the problem of getting better collection and processing of radar and optical data from missile reentries in the Pacific. Others have told me that the community's approach to the problems of narcotics and terrorism has been chaotic. The thing these subjects all have in common is that none of them are within the charter of any existing USIB Committee. What this says is that however poorly the Committees perform, in those areas where there are no committees, things are worse.

What if there were no USIB?

7. The proposition is that the sort of work now being done by the USIB Committees could be better performed by the IC Staff. I don't think so. Even though the IC Staff consists of people recruited from all parts of the community, they owe their allegiance to the D/DCI/IC. The present Committee representatives, from the best to the worst, all have one thing in common -- they represent their USIB principals directly. I believe that each intelligence chief will insist on nominating a man from his own organization to represent him in any issues which concern him, whether handled by the USIB or by the IC.

8. Thus, if the IC were to take over I would foresee the creation of a number of "task forces" or "working groups" or "ad hoc committees" to deal with the problems as they arise. The members would be nominated by the various intelligence chiefs. Over the course of time some of these groups would become institutionalized as standing committees dealing with related problems. In short, a process much like that in Orwell's *Animal Farm* is predicted.

9. The thing which would be missing from the new set-up would be the regular "meetings at the summit" between the DCI and the intelligence community chiefs. Under the present system, each Committee chairman knows

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he will have to present his results in person at a meeting of the DCI and other prestigious people. This acts as a powerful deterrent to slipshod work. Without the USIB forum, the caliber of people chosen to represent the various agencies is more likely to get worse than better. Also, the intelligence chiefs would be tempted to end-run the IC and appeal directly to the DCI whenever they were dissatisfied with the IC proceedings. In the long run, the problem of inter-agency coordination would be handled less efficiently than is now the case.

What ought to be done to make USIB more effective?

10. I have a number of suggestions, as follows:

a. The D/DCI/IC ought to take a more active role in the coordination of the activities of the USIB Committees. He should see to it that the right groups are working on the right problems and that actions which absorb more than one Committee are properly integrated. The authority to do this exists, but it was seldom exercised by the two previous incumbents.

b. The Committee chairmen should be exhorted to be more flexible in getting the work done. In particular, they should be encouraged to draw on specialists to handle issues which have a major budget impact. They should work with the IC Staff to make sure the problems are stated as precisely as possible. In many cases, defining the problem correctly is more than half the battle.

c. At the present time the USIB Committees get staff support in haphazard fashion. Some Committees have large staffs and others have none. Staff support for the Committees should be provided by the IC. This does not imply that the IC Staff needs to get bigger; rather,

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that the IC Staff could serve as a conduit for tasking the line organizations to do the necessary work.

d. A conscious effort should be made to upgrade the caliber of the chairmen and members of the various Committees. I believe that the best way to achieve this is to stipulate that these people all be from the line organizations. Furthermore, they should serve USIB only part time so as to retain their links to the line organizations.

e. The IC Staff is currently examining the question of the adequacy of the mix of the various Committees. It is anticipated that their review will result in a new spectrum of committees in which overlap is minimized and gaps are filled. This action was long overdue. It probably ought to be redone at regular intervals, perhaps every two years.

11. To recapitulate, I believe that the present USIB mechanism can be made to work better, and that it would be a mistake to seek a new mechanism for community coordination. But I think we should also recognize that so long as the structure of the community doesn't change there are limits to what can be achieved.

STATINTL



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Director

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Remarks: <p>The attached memorandum represents my own views but was shown to [REDACTED] Although he agrees with these views, he feels if he had written it he would have put greater stress on the need to get better representation in the USIB Committees and to draw the representatives from the analytical components of the community.</p>					
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